AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1 – 20 (Cancelled)

Claim 21 (Amended). In a method to make attrition resistant microspheroidal particles formed by spray drying an aqueous slurry in the absence of a catalytic metal and comprising a metal oxide sol and an inorganic particulate solid, separating the resulting microspheroidal particles, and drying the microspheroidal particles, the improvement comprising adding a minor portion of added microspheroidal particle fines to the aqueous slurry.

Claim 22 (Previously Presented). The method of claim 21 in which the metal oxide sol and inorganic particulate solid are formed from aluminum oxides, zirconium oxides, titanium oxides, iron oxides, cerium oxides, $BaTiSiO_3$, $SrTiO_3$, $PbTiO_3$, silica, talc, kaolin, mica, calcium carbonate, barium sulphate, calcium phosphate, or mixtures thereof.

Claim 23 (Previously Presented). The method of claim 21 in which the metal oxide sol and inorganic particulate solid are formed from silica.

Claim 24 (Previously Presented). The method of claim 21 in which the microspheroidal particles are formed using up to 35 wt%, based on total solids, of added microspheroidal particle fines in the slurry.

Claim 25 (Previously Presented). The method of claim 21 in which the microspheroidal particles are formed using up to 25 wt%, based on total solids, of added microspheroidal particle fines in the slurry.

Claim 26 (Previously Presented). The method of claim 21 in which the microspheroidal particles are formed using at least 5 wt% and up to 30 wt%, based on total solids, of recycled microspheroidal particle fines in the slurry.

Claim 27 (Previously Presented). The method of claim 21 in which the microspheroidal particles are formed using at least 15 wt% and up to 25 wt%, based on total solids, of recycled microspheroidal particle fines in the slurry.

Claim 28 (Amended). The method of claim 21 in which the ratio of the maximum average diameter of the added microspheroidal particle fines to the mean diameter of the resulting microspheroidal particles is about 0.01 to about 0.6 ~~of the mean diameter of the resulting microspheroidal particles~~.

Claim 29 (Previously Presented). The method of claim 21 in which the metal oxide sol and inorganic particulate solid are formed from silica, and using at least 5 wt% and up to 25 wt%, based on total solids, of added microspheroidal particle fines in the slurry.

Claim 30 (Amended). The method of claim 29 in which the ratio of the maximum the average diameter of the added microspheroidal particle fines to the mean diameter of the resulting microspheroidal particles is about 0.1 to about 0.4 ~~of the mean diameter of the resulting microspheroidal particles~~.

Claim 31 (Previously Presented). Attrition resistant microspheroidal particles formed by spray drying an aqueous slurry in the absence of a catalytic metal and comprising a metal oxide sol and an inorganic particulate solid, in which a minor portion of microspheroidal particle fines is added to the aqueous slurry.

Claim 32 (Previously Presented). The microspheroidal particles of claim 31 in which the metal oxide sol and inorganic particulate solid are formed from silica.

Claim 33 (Previously Presented). The microspheroidal particles of claim 32 in which the metal oxide sol is a silica sol.

Claim 34 (Previously Presented). The microspheroidal particles of claim 32 in which the inorganic particulate solid are silica particles.

Claim 35 (Amended). The microspheroidal particles of claim 32 which are formed using at least 5 wt% and up to 25 wt%, based on total solids, of added microspheroidal particle fines in the slurry and in which the ratio of the maximum average diameter of the added microspheroidal particle fines to the mean diameter of the resulting microspheroidal particles is about 0.01 to about 0.6 ~~of the mean diameter of the resulting microspheroidal particles~~.

Claim 36 (Previously Presented). The microspheroidal particles of claim 31 having a pore volume of 0.2 to 0.7 cm^3/g.

Claim 37 (Previously Presented). The microspheroidal particles of claim 31 having a microsphere surface area of 50 to 200 m^2/g.

Claim 38 (Previously Presented). The microspheroidal particles of claim 32 having a pore volume of 0.4 to 0.55 cm^3/g and a microsphere surface area of 60 to 125 m^2/g.

Claim 39 (Previously Presented). The microspheroidal particles of claim 32 having a particle size of 10 to 200 µm.

Claim 40 (Previously Presented). The microspheroidal particles of claim 38 having a particle size of 20 to 150 µm.

Claim 41 (Previously Presented). A fluidized bed, acetoxylation catalyst component comprising attrition resistant microspheroidal particles of claim 31 on which has been placed catalytic metals.

Claim 42 (Previously Presented). The catalyst component of claim 41 in which the catalytic metals comprise gold, palladium, ~~and~~ or mixtures thereof.

Claim 43 (Amended). A method of using the catalyst component of claim 41 in which ethylene, acetic acid, oxygen, and the catalyst component are contacted in a fluidized bed under ~~acetoxlation~~ acetoxylation conditions to produce vinyl acetate.

Claim 44 (New). The method of claim 21 in which the ratio of the maximum average diameter of the added microspheroidal particle fines to the mean diameter of the resulting microspheroidal particles is about 0.05 to about 0.5.